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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the sixty-ninth session

Observer Status for the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation in the General Assembly

Letter dated 13 March 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly of an item entitled "Observer status for the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum is attached in support of the aforementioned request (see annex I), as is a draft resolution (see annex II).

I have the honour to request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly

(*Signed*) Masood **Khan**
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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

1. Historical background

The idea for the establishment of the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) was put forward by the late Prime Minister of Turkey, Necmettin Erbakan, at a seminar on cooperation for development held in Istanbul, Turkey, in October 1996. The establishment of D-8 was officially announced in the Istanbul Declaration issued by the Summit of Heads of State and Government (the first D-8 Summit) on 15 June 1997. Its present membership consists of eight developing countries, namely, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.

The member countries of the Organization are rich with natural resources and a large population and characterized by economic potency and a huge and beautiful geographical endowment. The D-8 community has vast potential for development, given its large amounts of land, abundant inexpensive and skilled labour force, diversified human capital, rich natural resources and large market of more than 1 billion people.

From its inception, D-8 has reviewed the international political scene and concluded that the post-Cold War international situation, including the rapid globalization of the world's economic structure, has created both opportunities and challenges for developing countries, while conscious of the deep-rooted and sincere aspirations of humanity for peace, dialogue, cooperation, justice, equality and democracy. Envisioning the new grouping as a cooperative mechanism for socioeconomic development, it was agreed that the following principles would guide its spirit and activities:

- Peace instead of conflict
- Dialogue instead of confrontation
- Cooperation instead of exploitation
- Justice instead of double standards
- Equality instead of discrimination
- Democracy instead of oppression.

Based on friendship, solidarity and pursuit of sustainable economic growth and endowed with abundant human and natural resources, the D-8 community aspires to become a dynamic economic grouping promoting sustainable development and a major actor in global economic governance, the world economic system and international economic cooperation.

The objectives of D-8 are to improve the positions of developing countries in the world economy, diversify and create new opportunities in trade relations, enhance participation in decision-making at the international level and provide a better standard of living. The Organization is committed to working towards broadening support at the national level within its member States and strengthening its weight and voice at the regional and international levels, including through active engagement in and promotion of South-South and South-North cooperation.

The Organization's areas of cooperation encompass consultation and coordination at international forums in such areas as trade, agriculture and food security, industry and small to medium-sized enterprises, transportation, energy, communication and information, finance, banking and privatization, science and technology, poverty alleviation and human resources development, environment, health, tourism and culture. Its member States have hosted many technical meetings and explored different opportunities to promote, develop and strengthen their relationships in regard to these areas.

Moreover, agreements have been reached on the broad areas of economic and industrial cooperation, with due emphasis on the need for the engagement of both the public and private sector in D-8 member States. During the preparatory process for the establishment of the Organization, agreement was reached on the establishment of a coordinating secretariat mechanism in Istanbul, Turkey, which subsequently became the permanent seat of the D-8 secretariat.

2. Organizational structure

The principal organs of the Organization, as articulated in the preparatory process for its first Summit and subsequently adopted by it, are the Commission, the Council and the Summit.

(a) Commission

The Commission is the executive organ of the Organization. Working under the direct supervision of the Council and guided by the decisions and directives of both the Council and the Summit, the Commission is responsible for in-depth discussion and consideration of all issues and aspects of the work of the Organization, including the preparation of the work programme and agenda of the Council and the Summit, and preparation of the draft decisions to be submitted to the Council for consideration.

The Commission is composed of senior officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of D-8 member States, who are appointed by their respective Governments as Commissioners. Each Commissioner is responsible for national coordination in his or her country. The Commission meets twice a year, immediately prior to the annual meeting of the Council when the annual reports on the Organization's activities are discussed and for a second time, usually after a six-month interval, for the periodic review and assessment of the state of activities. The Commission may hold other meetings to consider issues, as mandated by the Council or the Summit.

(b) Council

The Council, as the principal decision-making organ of the Organization, is composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of member States. In principle, it is convened at least once a year. Functioning in accordance with the general policy of the Organization and the overall directives of the Summit, the Council acts as a forum for the thorough and comprehensive consideration of issues. It examines and deliberates on the reports submitted by the Commission, and decides on its recommendations.

The Council presents to the Summit reports on its work which contain recommendations considered necessary for the implementation of adopted policies and decisions. The Council is also entrusted with the responsibility for approving the draft work programme for each Summit, including approval of the draft decisions, recommendations and declarations to be submitted to the Summit for consideration and ultimate decision-making.

(c) Summit

The Summit, as the supreme organ of the Organization, is composed of the Heads of State and Government of its member countries. It is convened once every two years in one of the member States, by alphabetical rotation. The main function of the Summit is to provide overall guidance for the work and activities of the Organization in the achievement of its objectives. The Summit also adopts the recommendations of the Council, including major policy decisions in the form of declarations.

(d) Secretariat

The fifth Summit (Bali, Indonesia, 2006), cognizant of the need to enhance the Organization's coordinating apparatus, decided to establish the D-8 secretariat. The basic function of the secretariat was defined as providing efficient and effective coordination of all of the activities of the Organization, in particular as they relate to the work of its principal organs (Commission, Council and Summit) and to assist towards the effective implementation of the adopted policies and decisions. As indicated above, the affairs of the Organization during the period 1997-2006 were coordinated through the Executive Office in Istanbul, Turkey. The decision of the Bali Summit to establish the secretariat also elevated the level of Executive Director to that of Secretary-General, the functions and authority of whom were articulated subsequently in the statutory documents. The Secretary-General is selected from among qualified nationals of the member States based on alphabetical rotation and appointed by the Summit for a non-renewable four-year term.

3. Areas of cooperation

As indicated above, the D-8 Summit, convened every two years in one of the member States, serves as the supreme organ of the Organization and provides overall guidance for its work and activities aimed at achieving its original objectives and agreed policies. The succession of Summits, with the first held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1997 and the most recent, the eighth, held in Islamabad in 2012, has endeavoured to take stock of the performance of the Organization and to develop and articulate a vision and requisite policies relevant to the state and level of cooperation within the D-8 community.

According to the Roadmap for Economic Cooperation in the Second Decade of Cooperation (2008-2018), the Organization focuses on a number of areas of cooperation, such as trade, agriculture and food security, industrial cooperation and small and medium-sized enterprises, transportation, energy and minerals, investment, tourism, financial cooperation, communication and information technology, and science, technology and innovation. An important aspect of the overall policymaking of the Organization can be seen in the articulation of priority areas of activity for targeted and focused attention in a rather limited number of

areas, as distinct from earlier efforts which were dispersed over a much larger scope and area of activity.

During the eleventh session of the Council (Kuala Lumpur, 2008), the Ministers of Foreign Affairs agreed to streamline and rationalize the activities of the Organization, with a focus on five priority areas: trade, agriculture and food security, industrial cooperation and small and medium-sized enterprises, transportation, and energy and minerals. Based on this decision, a road map for the next decade was articulated. The decision of the sixth Summit later that year to adopt the above-mentioned Roadmap served as a turning point in the work and activities of the Organization.

4. Development of legal documents, other outstanding documents and agreements

(a) Legal documents

Taking into account the importance of efforts to coordinate the positions of its member States in various international forums and negotiations through collective measures and enhanced regional cooperation, the Organization has produced several legal documents in order to ensure its continued relevance, promote the interests of its members, and redouble efforts to meet global challenges through innovative cooperation.

Charter

Almost one decade after the establishment of the Organization, and as part of collective efforts geared to strengthening its legal framework, member States addressed the need for the articulation of a charter as its overarching legal document. During the eighth Summit, (Islamabad, 2012), the Heads of State and Government of member States adopted and signed, on 22 November, the D-8 Charter which was also considered a turning point for the Organization. The Charter collectively takes the Organization on a new path of cooperation. The principles and objectives enunciated in the Charter improve interaction and foster closer cooperation in economic relations among member States. Member States pledge to work in solidarity to confront common challenges faced by the D-8 community, especially in achieving food security, mitigating the impact of natural disasters and countering all forms of economic challenge which undermine economic progress and negatively affect the livelihood of their peoples.

Statutory documents

The administrative affairs of the Organization, during its first decade, were coordinated through a very compact office known as the Executive Office, which was based in Istanbul, Turkey. Gradual expansion in the work and activities of D-8 led its member States to consider the imperative of a more organized structure, with well-defined functions and procedures. Following the necessary preparatory work by the Commission, which was completed at its twenty-fifth session held on 4 and 5 July 2008, the Council, at its eleventh session, approved the set of statutory documents and the rules of procedure governing all aspects of the work of the D-8 secretariat. These documents, which came into effect as at 1 January 2009, have since regulated all aspects of the work of the secretariat.

Headquarters Agreement

Following the establishment of the D-8 secretariat in 2006, the adoption of the statutory documents in 2008 and the generous offer of the Government of Turkey to host the premises of the secretariat in Istanbul, the Headquarters Agreement was signed between the Government of Turkey and the secretariat in Ankara on 20 February 2009. The Agreement conferred on the secretariat legal international status, including diplomatic status and the relevant immunities for its staff, as established in the statutory documents. The conclusion of the Agreement with the host country was indeed an important step forward in the institutional development of the Organization and paved the way for the smooth and efficient performance of the secretariat and its staff.

(b) Other major documents

Road map

During the sixth Summit (Kuala Lumpur, 2008), the Heads of State and Government of member countries endorsed the Roadmap for Economic Cooperation in the Second Decade of Cooperation (2008-2018) as the vision to guide D-8 activities, with particular emphasis on the expansion of trade among its members with the aim of promoting development. Considering the respective roles of government and the private sector as complementary in the economic development process of the D-8 community, whereby government has a vital role to play in improving social conditions and opportunities, the vision of the Organization is that, by the end of the second decade of D-8 cooperation (2008-2018), the dynamism of socioeconomic cooperation among members of the D-8 community will lead to a significant level of economic development through an increase in intratrade and social welfare.

In order to achieve its vision, the Organization needs to underline and formulate new strategies, policies and measures in order to enhance effectively cooperation within the context of the second decade, 2008-2018, with joint efforts aimed at overcoming basic problems of its member countries and the achievement of economic development, particularly through the expansion of intratrade. This is in addition to the efforts of members to provide employment, reduce poverty, and promote new investment and industrial and infrastructure development, thereby progressing economic development and social welfare. One of the objectives and goals of D-8 cooperation in the forthcoming decade is that trade among its members will reach at least 15 to 20 per cent of their total percentage of world trade by the end of 2018.

Global Vision (2012-2030)

Taking into account the importance of the work and activities of the Organization for its member States in confronting emerging challenges in the coming years, the Heads of State and Government, on 22 November 2012, adopted the D-8 Global Vision (2012-2030) during the eighth Summit, held in Islamabad. The motive behind the document was based on recent developments in the social sciences, the integration of sociopolitical and socioeconomic factors in the analysis of processes, and the promotion of sustainable trade and economic interaction and relations. In addition, the document serves as a pragmatic approach in the context of the significant changes taking place at the global level, with important implications

and repercussions for the future of the Organization as a collective arrangement for economic cooperation, composed of eight countries with notable common interests yet heterogeneous features and characteristics.

(c) Agreements

As part of the collective effort towards institutionalization and facilitation of economic cooperation within the D-8 community, and between and among its member States, a number of legal instruments have been developed during the past 15 years.

Agreement on simplification of visa procedures for businessmen

Almost all studies on international trade have shown that facilitating the visa application procedures for businessmen will promote more business travel between and among member States, a stronger business network, better maintenance of the business relationship, wider promotion of trade in commodities and, as a consequence, a boost to the volume of trade. This means that there is a positive correlation between international travel and international trade in promoting trade in commodities among member countries. In addition, by encouraging the easing of visa application procedures and quantifying the extent to which international business travel furthers international trade, these studies have direct implications for policy. The Agreement on the simplification of visa procedures for businessmen of D-8 member States, the first legal instrument to be developed and articulated by the Organization, was completed at the third (Cairo, 2001) and subsequently signed at the sixth Summit (Kuala Lumpur, 2008). Thus far, the Agreement has been ratified by and entered into force for six member States (Bangladesh, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey).

Preferential Trade Agreement

Trade had been considered a priority area for cooperation among the D-8 member countries from the very outset, and has received increasing attention at its summit meetings. The initial proposal for a preferential trade agreement and a multilateral agreement on administrative customs matters arose from an expert group meeting held in the Islamic Republic of Iran in January 2003. Subsequently, the Commission, at its fifteenth session (Teheran, 2004), agreed on the need for such instruments. The process reached fruition at twentieth session of the Commission, with the agreements signed during the fifth Summit (Bali, Indonesia, 2006). The Preferential Trade Agreement envisages cutting import tariffs and removing non-tariff and para-tariff barriers in order to boost trade among the member States. The Agreement came into effect in August 2011 after ratification by five contracting parties, since increased to six (Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey). In the meantime, concrete measures were taken for the implementation of the Agreement, in particular the convening of first meeting of the Trade Ministers Council in Abuja in June 2013. The principle outcome of this important meeting was that the Ministers agreed on 1 November 2013 as the new cut-off date for the implementation of the first instalment of tariff reductions by the contracting parties.

Multilateral Agreement on Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters

The need for the Multilateral Agreement on Administrative Customs Matters dates back to a working group meeting held in Teheran in January 2003. The Agreement was adopted and signed at the fifth Summit (Bali, Indonesia, 2006). Having been ratified by Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey, the Agreement entered into force for those seven countries as at 24 October 2011. The Agreement, which seeks to promote and facilitate cooperation among the D-8 member States in such areas as the exchange of information, capacity-building, administrative assistance, transit facilitation and the Customs Data Bank, is meant to assist in the promotion and expansion of intratrade, the principle objective of the Agreement.

5. Affiliated institutions

The increasing level of activities and cooperation within the Organization, reflected in the annual workload of its secretariat, make it all the more obvious that the attempt to increase the level of organizational development could be strengthened in cooperation with affiliated institutions. These institutions would work in collaboration with the secretariat in the implementation of programmes and projects, as stipulated in the Roadmap, in overcoming the challenges that lie ahead of the Organization in an ever-changing world.

Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry

The idea of private sector engagement in the activities of the Organization goes back to its very early days, as reflected, inter alia, in the Istanbul Declaration (1997). Along the same lines, the Cairo Declaration (2001) called for the establishment of a business forum. Further perusal of the recommendations contained in the latter Declaration led to the establishment of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the Islamic Republic of Iran in February 2004, with the stated objective of bringing the concerned entities in D-8 member States under a common umbrella and promoting private sector activities within the Organization.

Animal Feed Information Centre

In response to ongoing food price volatility, particularly as regards the price and availability of food for livestock, the Organization established the Animal Feed Information Centre in Jakarta in October 2012. The Centre's webpage (www.d8-afic.org) highlights the purposes of the D-8 Working Group on Animal Feed which tackles issues related to the production and supply of quality animal feed by executing existing research and projects in tangible ways, including as the main media for the exchange of data and information on animal feed products.

Fertilizer Association

The role of fertilizers in supporting food security is clearly of some magnitude and essential for developing countries, especially as concerns volume and availability in the production and consumption of fertilizers. In that connection, the Organization established the Fertilizer Association (see www.d8ftc.com) in Teheran in March 2013. The aims of the Association are to facilitate the large-scale state-owned and private companies, institutions, investment banks and research

institutions of D-8 member States involved in the trade of chemical fertilizers (nitrogen, phosphate and potash) and the bioorganic fertilizer business.

Technology Transfer and Exchange Network

In the age of globalization, a technology transfer and exchange network is essential in providing the appropriate basis and infrastructure for the exchange and transfer of product data, technologies and services among D-8 member countries. With this in mind, the Organization established the Technology Transfer and Exchange Network in Teheran in October 2013. Its website (www.d8tten.org) is intended to serve as a web-based marketplace for technology suppliers and contains a database on the availability of the most recent technologies, as well as technology offers and requests and technology suppliers and seekers from D-8 member countries.

6. Permanent representation of member States

Permanent Mission of Nigeria

In line with article 6 of the Headquarters Agreement of the Organization, the Office of the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the D-8 secretariat, the first of its kind, was established in Istanbul, Turkey, in September 2011. Its establishment was a demonstration of commitment of Nigeria to the objectives of the Organization, with the particular aim of promoting the transformational agenda of the country's economic and trade relations with the other D-8 member States.

7. External relations

The Organization has taken a positive view towards the establishment and promotion of liaison and cooperation with other regional and multilateral institutions and organizations. Such liaison and cooperation has been pursued since the establishment of the D-8 secretariat in 2006 and, more specifically, since the appointment of the Secretary-General of the Organization in 2007. The conclusion of memorandums of understandings with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and the Islamic World Science Citation Centre (ISC) and a letter of intent with the World Maritime University (WMU) represent the outcome of the activities undertaken.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation

The memorandum of understanding between the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and D-8 was signed on 7 October 2010. All D-8 member States are members of the Organization. The memorandum of understanding seeks to encourage the development of joint programmes and projects in all sectors through utilization of the human and material resources of both organizations, including in such priority areas as trade promotion, agriculture, food security and tourism development.

Economic Cooperation Organization

The memorandum of understanding between ECO and D-8 was signed in Istanbul, Turkey, on 6 October 2011, during the second D-8 Ministerial Meeting on

Industry. As stated in the memorandum, the two organizations wish to strengthen their cooperation in such areas as trade, transport, energy, agriculture, food security, industrial cooperation and small and medium-sized enterprise development. The memorandum also underlines the need for the exchange of information, knowledge, best practice and experience between the two organizations. To ensure the efficient and timely implementation of planned activities, the two organizations have agreed to conduct joint mid-term reviews of the implementation of the memorandum of understanding and to consider further cooperative activities.

African-Asian Rural Development Organization

Taking into account the importance of practical strategies towards promoting sustainable agricultural growth in its member States, D-8 signed a memorandum of understanding with AARDO in Abuja on 6 December 2013, during the fourth D-8 Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Food Security. The memorandum serves as a pragmatic strategy for achieving the expansion of agricultural cooperation and for sharing experience and lessons learned between both organizations, including human resources development, the joint implementation of development projects, the sharing of information, knowledge and resources, the promotion of agrotrade and networking.

International Youth Foundation

The memorandum of understanding between IYF and D-8 was signed in Baltimore, United States of America, on 3 December 2008. According to the memorandum, both organizations will work towards developing a framework for sustained collaboration, with particular emphasis on the participation of D-8 member countries in IYF programmes on youth education and employment.

World Maritime University

A letter of intent on the establishment of cooperation between WMU and D-8 was signed in Malmo, Sweden, in July 2012. The intention of the letter is to establish cooperative and friendly relations between the two organizations. The exchange of experience and expertise, provision of technical advice, capacity-building, and utilization of the human and material resources of both organizations have been particularly highlighted in the letter.

Islamic World Science Citation Centre

The memorandum of understanding between ISC and D-8 was signed in Shiraz, Islamic Republic of Iran, on 4 July 2013. The memorandum is aimed at establishing an ISC branch office, producing effective policies in the areas of science and technology, convening workshops, and promoting higher education and scientific cooperation among D-8 member countries.

8. Conclusion: modality for seeking observer status for the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation

The complexity of the current global economic environment has made it more important than ever to recognize and encourage the qualitative as well as the quantitative aspects of growth, integrating such concepts as inclusiveness and environmental sustainability to provide a clearer picture of what is needed and what

works. Indeed, the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation, as an economic grouping, is focusing increasingly on quality growth in its various activities. In this context, its member countries will start to explore the factors necessary to ensure that national competitiveness remains sustainable over the longer term. Subsequently, they will present their preliminary thoughts on how to understand and measure quality growth through a lens of competitiveness by defining sustainable competitiveness in economic, social and environmental terms.

In an age of globalization and interdependence, Governments throughout the world, of both developed and developing countries, are revitalizing their national economies through various strategies, policies and measures, including by establishing or joining group and collective arrangements. Given the nature and pace of ongoing developments at the regional and global levels, especially the strong trend towards regionalism, it is expected that the Organization, as an example of collective effort towards achieving economic progress and development, would also move in a manner commensurate with the requirements of development and the pace of change surrounding its individual members and of the Organization as a whole.

Since its establishment in 1997, the Organization, through its principal organs and technical meetings, has been testing the best possible ideas and formulas with a view to determining an overall picture of the significant changes taking place at the global level that have important implications and repercussions for the future of cooperation. Bearing in mind the political significance of the upcoming ninth Summit to be held in Turkey in late 2014, the Organization is bound to seize the momentum and enter its second life cycle phase, and strategically devise effective ways to achieve all of its goals, in accordance with the ideals of its distinguished founders.

It is both imperative and time for the Organization to broaden its contribution at the national level within its member States and to strengthen its weight and voice at the regional and international levels, in particular at the United Nations, as enshrined in the D-8 Charter, Roadmap and Global Vision. Granting permanent observer status to the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation will increase its contribution to and its cooperation with the United Nations and its programmes.

The motive behind the request for observer status and participation of the Organization in the General Assembly is in line with the idea of its founders which is to contribute collectively in all areas of cooperation towards sustainable economic development and the reduction of poverty in the world, as well as in the D-8 community. The General Assembly is an umbrella organ possessing the very objectives and goals of the Organization; it will be able to provide guidance for all areas of cooperation and facilitate incorporation of the role of D-8 member States in international policy and economic coordination.

By obtaining observer status in the General Assembly, the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation will strengthen its public visibility, benefit from worldwide experience, including the opportunity to enhance its capacity-building process, and share a platform with international community. As a young and promising intergovernmental organization, it looks forward to the opportunity to work closely with the United Nations. Such closer relations will enable it to make great strides in its march forward and to play its due role at the regional and international levels, particularly with regard to the peoples of its member States.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote relationship and cooperation between the United Nations and the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation,

1. *Decides* to invite the Developing Eight Countries Organization for Economic Cooperation to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.